

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 05594 170551Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ICAE-00 ISO-00 EUR-12 /025 W  
-----055299 170607Z /20

R 170411Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
TO USICA WASHDC  
SECSTATE WASHDC 3800

UNCLAS CANBERRA 5594

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USICA FOR EA, PGM/PPF

STATE FOR INR

E.O. 11652: N/A  
SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION TO SOVIET DISSIDENT TRIALS

REF: STATE 178559

ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER GOT FRONT PAGE HEAD-  
LINES FOR HIS CONDEMNATION OF SOVIET REPRESSION, (REPORTED  
SEPARATELY IN STATE DEPT. CHANNELS) ALL OF AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR  
DAILIES MADE EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE TRIALS OF SOVIET  
DISSIDENTS SHCHARANSKY AND GINSBURG AND LITHUANIAN VIKTORAS  
PETLUS. ALL THE MEDIA HAVE GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE TO THE EVENTS  
IN THE USSR, THE U.S. AND OTHER REACTION TO THEM, AND  
REPEATED SOME COMMENT FROM FOREIGN MEDIA SOURCES. CARTOONISTS  
HAVE GIVEN VENT TO STRONG CONDEMNATORY OPINIONS IN ALL OF  
THE PAPERS, BUT TODAY'S IS THE FIRST WRITTEN COMMENT FROM  
THE DOMESTIC PRESS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A SINGLE EDITORIAL  
ON JULY 7 (SEE USINFO 05412).

THE AGE (MELBOURNE) IN ITS EDITORIAL FOR MONDAY JULY 17,  
STATES THAT THE SENTENCES IMPOSED ON THESE HUMAN RIGHTS  
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ACTIVISTS WILL SURPRISE NO ONE, YET STILL SHOCK ALL.  
THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES:  
"A NEW PHASE OF REPRESSION IS UNFOLDING IN WHICH THE KREMLIN  
IS CONTINUING TO FLAUNT NOT ONLY INTERNATIONAL LAW BUT ITS  
OWN." THE AGE NOTES COMMENTS ON THE TRIAL BY SECRETARY OF  
STATE VANCE AND THE SOVIET ASTRONOMER, NOW RESIDENT IN MUNICH,  
DR. KRONID LYUBARSKY. THE PAPER DECLARES THAT LYUBARSKY'S

MESSAGE IS CLEAR: "IT IS THAT OUTSIDE OPINION HAS PLAYED, AND NO DOUBT CAN STILL PLAY, SOME CONSIDERABLE PART IN EASING THE BURDEN OF THE SOVIET PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE." THE NATIONAL DAILY THE AUSTRALIAN (JULY 17, 1978) UNDER THE EDITORIAL HEADING "A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE" SAYS: "ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY MUST BE FREED. THOSE IN THE WORLD WHO REGARD FREEDOM AS PRECIOUS MUST START FROM THAT AND WORK OUT HOW, NOT IF, IT CAN BE DONE."

THE AUSTRALIAN EDITORIAL CONCLUDES: "THOSE OF US WHO HAVE FREEDOM CANNOT ENJOY IT WHILE SHCHARANSKY AND THE OTHER HAVE LOST IT BECAUSE THEY SOUGHT TO PROTECT IT FOR EVERYBODY".

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD (JULY 17, 1978) CARRIES AN EDITORIAL THAT DECLARES THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIALS WAS NEVER IN DOUBT AND THE CRUELTY OF THE SENTENCES NOT UNEXPECTED.

"NEVERTHELESS, NOT SINCE THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN CRISIS IN 1968 HAS MOSCOW SO DEEPLY OUTRAGED WORLD OPINION AND, MOREOVER, DONE IT WITH SUCH STUDIED DELIBERATION," THE EDITORIAL STATES.

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD OBSERVES THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS ENGAGED IN SUSTAINED VIOLATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS SIGNED IN 1975. THE PAPER ALSO EXPRESSES THE OPINION THAT THE TRIALS "AMOUNT TO A SLAP IN THE FACE TO PRESIDENT CARTER WHO LAST YEAR PUBLICLY PLEDGED THAT THE ACCUSED MAN HAD NEVER UNCLASSIFIED

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IN ANY WAY WORKED FOR THE CIA."

THE PAPER ALSO CONSIDERS THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN "ENTIRELY PROPER".  
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## Message Attributes

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